

## Savage Rapids Dam Removal Project

**Project Summary:** The Savage Rapids Dam was constructed in 1921 by the Grants Pass Irrigation District (GPID). Fish passage improvements in the 1930s, 1950s and late 1970s helped reduce losses, but fish passage and screening problems continued and support to remove the dam grew. In 2003, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized to construct pumping facilities on the Rogue River to supply irrigation water to GPID and subsequently remove the dam to permanently resolve fish passage issues. Major milestones in the dam removal project are:

- 2001: The Grants Pass Irrigation District signed a Federal Court consent decree agreeing to stop diverting water from Oregon's Rogue River using the district-owned Savage Rapids Dam.
- 2002: Congress appropriated money to Reclamation to evaluate pumping alternatives at Savage Rapids Dam.
- 2003: Public Law 108-137 authorized the construction of pumping facilities to supply irrigation water to Grants Pass Irrigation District and the removal of the dam to permanently resolve fish passage issues at the site.
- 2004: Congress appropriated funds to Reclamation for final design/construction contracts for a new irrigation pumping system and removal of Savage Rapids Dam.
- 2005: The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board awarded GPID \$3 million for dam removal.
- 2006: Reclamation awarded the construction contract to Slayden Construction and construction began in October; total estimated project cost is \$39.3 million; contributing partners include the GPID, the Oregon Water Enhancement Board and Waterwatch.
- 2009: Removal was largely completed.

**Strategic Value:** The Rogue River offers scenic beauty, world-class whitewater and a renowned salmon and steelhead fishery. The Savage Rapids Dam obstructed native salmon and steelhead trout during their migration upstream from the ocean to spawn in-river. More than 500 miles of spawning habitat is upstream of the dam.

**Benefits:** On October 9, 2009 the radial gates at Savage Rapids Dam were closed, returning the Rogue River to its historic stream channel for the first time since 1921, and allowing salmon and trout the opportunity to migrate freely



past the site on their way to and from the Pacific Ocean. A pumping plant was built downstream of the dam site to meet irrigation needs in the area. The total estimated project cost is about \$39.3 million, which includes a grant for \$3 million from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for dam removal. The project also provides permanent protection of significant stream flows in the Rogue River and has removed an obstacle to boating. In addition, water deliveries to Grants Pass Irrigation District are maintained while complying with ESA-related fish passage issues.

Savage Rapids after dam removal and construction of the new pumping plant